

**Amendments to the Claims**

For the Examiner's convenience, this Amendment includes the text of all claims under examination, a parenthetical expression for each claim to indicate the status of the claim, and markings to show changes relative to the immediate prior version of each currently amended claim.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus comprising:  
a carriage mounted with a printing head for ejecting ink and for scanning the printing head in a main scanning direction;  
a suction pump suction means for sucking ink from the printing head;  
capping means for performing a cap closing operation in which an ejection port surface of the printing head is covered with a cap member when said suction means pump sucks ink from the printing head and performing a cap opening operation in which the cap member is separated from the ejection port surface after suction by said suction means pump; and  
help means performing a cap opening help operation that facilitates the cap opening operation, when said capping means performs the cap opening operation;  
detection means for detecting whether the cap opening operation by said capping means can be performed or not; and  
wherein help means performs control means for causing said help means to perform the cap opening help operation if said detection means detects that the cap opening operation by said capping means cannot be performed.

Claim 2. (Canceled).

Claim 3. (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cap opening and cap closing operations by said capping means are performed by means of moving of the carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 4. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap opening operation detecting~~ detection means detects whether said carriage can move or not.

Claim 5. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said ~~cap opening operation detecting~~ detection means includes means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.

Claim 6. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said ~~cap opening operation detecting~~ detection means includes means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage.

Claim 7. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said ~~cap opening operation detecting~~ detection means includes means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the predetermined value continues for a predetermined time.

Claim 8. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap-opening~~ help means includes means for stopping the cap member at the printing head for a predetermined time.

Claim 9. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap-opening~~ help means includes means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 10. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap-opening~~ help means includes means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap member for a predetermined time.

Claim 11. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap-opening~~ help means has a combination of ~~opening~~ help means for stopping the cap member at the printing head for a predetermined time, ~~opening~~ help means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction, and ~~opening~~ help means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap member for a predetermined time.

Claim 12. (Currently amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~cap-opening operation detecting detection~~ means is means of a combination of ~~detecting detection~~ means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power

source for driving said carriage, detecting detection means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the predetermined value continues for a predetermined time, and detecting detection means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.